

Battle Ready

Ephesians 6

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. **11** Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. **12** For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. **13** Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. **14** Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, **15** and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. **16** In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

For a Roman soldier, a shield was used as a form of protection. It was worn strapped to one's arm and, at any time, it could be held up to deflect attacks. In addition, it could be used as an offensive weapon to knock enemies over with force.

Hebrews 11

1 Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. **2** This is what the ancients were commended for.

The devil is constantly seeking to persuade us to put our confidence elsewhere. Why? ***Because the enemy knows that persistent and confident trust in God acts as a shield against every fiery dart and flaming arrow launched in our direction.***

Hebrews 11

6And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

The Roman soldier's shield was called a scutum. Most scutum consisted of wood covered by an animal hide with metal trim around the edges. It was not what most of us imagine, something circular and small like a trash can lid (like what a knight in the Middle Ages carried). Instead, it was quite large, ranging about two to three feet wide and four to five feet long, resembling a heavy-duty door. As you can imagine, it took training and stamina for a Roman soldier to carry his shield.

Another neat fact is that a soldier could crouch his entire body behind his scutum when needed. In addition, soldiers could link their scutum together to form a turtle-like shell over the top of their entire unit. Unified as one, they could shield each other from falling during vicious attacks.

In the same way, we can picture believers within the church coming alongside those who are enduring hard times and linking arms to empower and strengthen their faith. When brothers and sisters in Christ come together in truth and righteousness, united as one in the Holy Spirit, we form our own turtle-like formation that can protect us against the schemes of the devil.

Those soldiers had to willfully pick up and use their shields to guarantee any protection, and so do we.

James 2

14What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? **15**Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. **16**If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? **17**In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

A believer with his or her shield of faith in place doesn't tell God what to do but trusts God to faithfully fulfill His promises no matter how crazy it may seem at the time.

Here's the abbreviated version of biblical faith, God said it, so I believe it, and I will act upon it.

Faith in God is not crazy, it's the sanest thing a person can do. We already have everything we need to protect ourselves against Satan's schemes, an always faithful God to His unwavering Word. But if we don't know God and we don't know His words, we might as well hand the enemy a victory flag in advance. **Even though the devil can't steal our salvation, you better believe he will do everything he can to steal our confidence in Christ.**

When the enemy says I am weak, faith says I am strong in Christ ([Eph. 6:10](#)).

When the enemy lays blame at my feet, faith says the blood of Christ makes me clean ([Col. 3:13](#); [1 John 1:9](#)).

When the enemy says you are a nobody, faith says I am a new creation thanks to the life-giving presence of my Lord Jesus Christ ([2 Cor. 5:17](#)).

When the enemy says you can't do anything right, faith says I can do everything God calls me to do through Jesus who gives me strength ([Phil. 4:13](#)).

When the enemy says God doesn't care about you, faith says, oh yes, He does ([John 3:16](#)).

When the enemy says you should give up, faith says God will carry me ([Ex. 19:4](#); [Isa. 46:4](#)).

When the enemy says you are all alone, faith says God is still with me (Heb. 13:5).

When the enemy says you are a slave to sin, faith says no, I am a servant of righteousness (Rom. 6:18).

When the enemy says, you lack what you most need, faith says God will supply all my needs (Matt. 6:25–33; Phil. 4:19).

Do you see how this works? It's one thing to talk about faith, but it's another thing to live it. Wishful thinking doesn't shield us, but God's Word does.

Proverbs 30

5“Every word of God is flawless;
he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.

CS Lewis

Because reason cannot survive unless built on a foundation of faith, we must diligently seek to grow in faith, to grow from little faith to great faith. And as we do, we will find that faith will sustain us whatever may come and will see us safely home.

A dart is a weapon designed to injure, disable, or kill. Satan attacks through temptation, he seeks to lure people off the strait and narrow, or better yet, prevent them from finding it. If we accept the reality of free will, we must acknowledge this. **Satan cannot force us to sin, he must tempt and deceive instead.**

It is our faith that gives us the reason to say no to the short-term thrills in order to pursue something eternally more transcendent and worthwhile. The tradeoff to say yes to God and no to Satan is entirely rational, if we trust God.

Faith is Bold and Courageous. This will look different for everyone. But what brings us together is that God is calling us to stand out.

You can do difficult things. We are created to be amazingly resilient people who face challenges every day.